To women of all social classes, his gentle charisma was particularly attractive. Miner’s wives and society matrons, along with the leading artists of his day, all appear to have fallen under his spell. Yet while charming all and sundry, Crosslé kept up his community work - even in the area of sport.

In the early 1920s, he was President of the Thirroul Golf Club and, later, it was through Crosslé’s generosity that the Thirroul Surf Club purchased its first surfboat, the ‘Francis Crosslé’, in 1938. Because of the allure of Crosslé’s personality, we can today rejoice in the large number of extant works of the Northern Illawarra by some of the greats of 20th century Australian art - Gruner, Lindsay, Grace Cossington Smith, Arthur Murch and Margaret Coen.

For Arthur Murch, who later went on to win the Archibald prize for portraiture, the beaches of the Northern Illawarra appear to have been a particularly important influence on his early beachscapes with figures.

Little wonder then that places like Thirroul have continued to attract the attention of artists of the calibre of Brett Whitely, Colin Lanceley and Paul Delprat, along with Australia’s foremost composer, Peter Sculthorpe, who dedicated his composition ‘Small Town’ to Thirroul and its connections with the author D. H. Lawrence.

Crosslé was also an artist in his own right. His novel, Dona Juaná, was written at Bulli throughout the 1920s and eventually published in 1931. In this great labour of love, Norman Lindsay offered constant advice and criticism. Crosslé also wrote the introductions for a number of Lindsay’s publications.

In 1945, Crosslé was posthumously awarded the France Libre Medal for this services to members of the French community in Australia during World War Two.

As surgeon to the many, midwife to the arts, and friend to Australia’s gifted artistic elite, it is surprising that the only monument to this important figure in Australian cultural and medical history is the ‘Crosslé Ward’ at Bulli Hospital.

No doubt, in time, wider recognition will come to Doctor Francis Clement Crosslé - one of the Illawarra’s most distinguished and cultured citizens.
After some introductory remarks by Church dignitaries, it proceeds with a sketch of the early history of the Church in Illawarra, and the circumstances surrounding the appointment of Bishop Polding as Bishop of Australia, and of Father Rigney to the charge of the Illawarra Mission.

This is followed by an outline history of each parish and biographical notes on Illawarra priests. These in turn are followed by a series of short essays dealing with various aspects of the Church's work and its effect on Illawarra.

As mentioned earlier, the work is a fine example of book-production, and the numerous illustrations throw much light on innumerable aspects of the Church's work. Even to collect and organise the masses of material would have been a tremendous task, and all future historians of Illawarra, of any or no religious persuasion, will have cause to be grateful to those responsible for its compilation.

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D. H. LAWRENCE AT THIRRROUL

"One of the great things about Kangaroo," writes Joseph Davis in D. H. Lawrence at Thirroul, "is that it contains something for practically everybody." Genially, Davis gives the game away. The novel that Lawrence wrote in six weeks in 1922 at Thirroul, near Wollongong, has been persistently plundered for extra-literary material and seriously misinterpreted in literary terms. Davis seeks to right both wrongs in a book that also has something for everyone: "personal reminiscence, a little geography, some intensive local history, bits of general and political history, as well as bursts of political sleuthing and some sustained literary criticism...."

One part of Kangaroo is evidently autobiographical - the long chapter called "The Nightmare", which recalls Lawrence's harassment by military authorities during his sojourn in Cornwall in 1917. It was Robert Darrock's D. H. Lawrence in Australia (1981) which contended that there was a factual basis for the contacts of Somers - hero of the novel - with a secret army in Australia; that Lawrence had himself made the acquaintance of leaders of such an army. Much of the work of Davis's book is a courteous dismantling of Darrock's argumentative manoeuvres.

While he admits "a possibility that Darrock's thesis might well be partially correct", Davis insists that Darrock's persistent "use of fiction to substantiate fact . . . particularly when it is unsupported by anything more than circumstantial corroborative detail, is not evidence". Instead, Davis argues that Lawrence's experience of fascist/socialist conflicts in Italy, together with what he learned of the Australian postwar political scene on shipboard and in Western Australia, influenced the depiction of local politics in Kangaroo. He believes that the contacts